[The Deputy Chairman]

the deadly attack on his life which is so precious and valuable for the people of India. To liberate a country from pain and grief and to bring peace and cheer in others' lives, is undoubtedly a subtle and highly dedicated task. Shri Rajiv Gandhi has shown his acumen as an able mediator to solve the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. We admire his qualities of head and heart. This Accord is not only historic but also unique in many respects which will go a long way to bring about peace and unity in Sri Lanka and India. I congratulate Shri Rajiv Gandhi and Shri Jayewardene for this magnificent achievement.

I am sure that I am voicing the feelings of the entire House by conveying our best wishes to our Prime Minister for his long life in the service of our country.

I hope this Resolution has the unanimous support of the House.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Resolution is adopted unanimously.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

I. Re. Incident at Colombo on 30th July, 1987

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Madam Deputy Chairman,

I rise to make a statement on the incident which happened in Colombo at about 10.20 A.M. yesterday morning, i.e. 30-7-87.

As part of the official programme, the Prime Minister was scheduled to review the Guard of Honour at the farewell ceremony. Special precautions, as agreed to between the two Governments, had been implemented. The review guard was in two rows. In accordance with the schedule, the P.M. reviewed only the front row. Towards the end of the review, after P.M. had passed one of the Naval guards, the said guard lifted his rifle and in one swing motion hit the P.M. with the butt of the rifle. The rifle butt hit the P.M. on the left shoulder and grazed his head. Instantaneously, the Personal Security Officer, who was only two paces behind, pounced on the Naval guard and threw him to the ground and pinned him down. The Naval guard's rifle also fell to the ground. The Commander of the Guard of Honour, who was immediately behind the P.M., also threw himself on the Naval guard.

Sensing the unusual movement, P.M. had moved forward very quickly and turned around. Special Protection Group's close protection team, which was just to the right side of the Personal Security Officer, immediately surrounded the P.M. and gave him full body cover. All other security personnel of the Special Protection Group carried out their respective duties. P.M. was escorted quickly to the special enclosure where President Jayawardene, Mrs. Jayawardene and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi were standing. He bid goodbye to President Jayawardene and Mrs. Jayawardene and walked a few steps to his car. The ceremonial drive to the helipad was completed.

The Sri Lankan security personnel immediately took charge of the Naval guard and removed him to custody. No other member of the Guard of Honour made any unusual movement, nor were the arrangements for the ceremony disturbed in any other way.

Since the sole assailant had been immobilized instantaneously, there was no need to resort to any other action.

I am sure that the whole House will join me in expressing our relief and happiness that the Prime Minister is safe and is back amidst us.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER
Re: **Indo-Sri Lanka agreement**

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): Madam Deputy Chairman, yesterday I returned from a brief but momentous visit to Colombo and I would like to take the House into confidence about the outcome. I consider the visit momentous because His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka and I signed an Agreement on the 29th of July, which aims at bringing to an end the difficult conflict which has afflicted our friendly neighbour Sri Lanka for years. The House is aware of the background of the ethnic conflict between the citizens of Sri Lanka which has its roots in complex historical and socio-economic practices. The conflict assumed acute dimensions over the last four years endangering the very stability, unity and integrity of Sri Lanka.

Things reached a low with the outbreak of unprecedented violence against Tamils in Sri Lanka in 1983. I do not wish to go into the details of the large scale killings and the extensive sufferings which affected the Sri Lankan people. The period between July 1983 and May 1987 was a particularly tragic chapter in Sri Lankan history. Thousands of civilians were killed — Tamils, Sinhalese, women and children, even monks, priests. Thousands were rendered homeless and became refugees, as it were within Sri Lanka itself. India received nearly 150 thousands Sri Lankan Tamil refugees.

India has a deep interest in Sri Lanka's unity, integrity and stabilty. The entire country has felt concerned at the strife in Sri Lanka. President Jayawardane sought our good offices in finding an equitable and enduring solution to the crisis. We agreed to help. Our efforts were directed towards getting the difficulties and apprehensions of Sri Lanka's Tamil citizens removed, so that Sri Lanka could preserve its unity and integrity as well as its multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-religious plural character. Four years of patient and unremitting dialogue culminated in the Agreement signed in Colombo on 29th of July. President Jayawardans and I have also exchanged letters agreeing on measures to meet our mutual concerns and to strengthen our bilateral relations.

We have structured a framework for a durable solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic problem. The Agreement meets the basic aspirations which animated the Tamils' struggle, namely, the desire to be recognised as a district ethnic entity; political autonomy for managing their political future; an appropriate devolution of governmental power to meet this objective, the recognition of the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka as areas of historical habitation of the Tamils, and the acknowledgement and designation of Tamil as an official language of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

The Agreement constitutes the Eastern and Northern Provinces of Sri Lanka into one administrative unit with an elected Provincial Council and a Chief Minister. Powers would be devolved to the Provincial Council within the framework of the proposals finalised between May to December 1986 to ensure a full measure of autonomy to the Provinces in Sri Lanka.

The Emergency in Sri Lanka is to be lifted in the near future. The cessation of hostilities and the surrender of arms is to take place within a defined time frame. A general amnesty is to be granted to all militant cadres. Elections to the Provincial Councils are to be held within three months.